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Agenda items 17 and 18

The situation in the Middle East

Question of Palestine

Security Council
Sixty-third year

Identical letters dated 27 March 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I write to inform you regarding the continuation of rocket attacks carried out by Palestinian terrorists in the Gaza Strip against Israeli civilians.

Yesterday, Wednesday, 26 March 2008, two Israeli civilians were wounded after Palestinian terrorists in the Gaza Strip fired some 20 Qassam rockets and mortar shells at southern Israel. Both of the victims suffered shrapnel wounds, and nine others were treated for shock. Earlier in the day, a rocket landed in the backyard of a home in a western Negev kibbutz, causing damage to nearby buildings.

In addition, an Israeli civilian was lightly wounded when Palestinian terrorists in Gaza fired at a group of farmers near Kibbutz Ein Hashlosha, the same area where a volunteer from Ecuador was killed by terrorist sniper fire in January. The man sustained minor injuries to the eye when one of the bullets struck a water tank, causing shrapnel to spray.

As I told the Security Council earlier this week, the perceived quiet and lull in Hamas's attacks is a complete mirage. Clearly, the rockets out of Gaza have not stopped, and Hamas continues to smuggle and produce more rockets. Thus, Hamas bears complete responsibility for the situation, and in particular indiscriminate rocket attacks against Israeli civilians, which serve no real purpose and are in violation of international law. The senseless firing of rockets demonstrates that Hamas has no interest other than an all-out campaign of violence and terrorism against Israel.

Israel will continue to defend itself and protect its civilians, as is the right and responsibility of every nation, in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter.

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I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 17 and 18, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Dan **Gillerman**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative